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A Doctoral Resume

Trauma of Identity Crisis in Women in the Fictional World of Bapsi Sidhwa

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Introduction:

Indian women writing in English is being recognized as major contemporarycurrent in English language –literature. But if we study the history then we find that the work of women writers has been undervalued because of patriarchal domination. Indian women writers are victims of prejudice. The majority of novels written by Indian women writers depict the psychological sufferings of the frustrated home makers. But now it is growing rapidly. They are writing against the old patriarchal domination. They are no longer puppets in the hands of man.

Indian women novelists give a new dimension to the Indian literature. They have developed their writing over a period of time. They changed the old trends not only in novel but also in all genres. Women Writers used new techniques to express their creative imagination they asked cultural questions to find some way of living tolerantly in such a dangerous world. One of the recurring themes in their novels is female experiences in the family and in the society. It also affects the cultural and large patterns of India. Nowadays, people enjoy reading the novels presented by the new age of women writers.

In 19th century both progressive and orthodox reformers supported female education in India, believing that social evils could be eliminated through education .Christian missionaries and British rulers especially in Bengal where the British had made their first inroads in the mid - 19th century, started girls schools. In the 1980's Indian women started to graduate from universities. But it had its own limitations to the larger towns and cities. So here the problem is that if an author writes in English with the purpose of changing social tradition , the language

excludes the women whose involvement is most needed, English having no place in those women's daily lives.

Indian literature is basically written in various languages such as Assamese,Bengali,Gujarati,Hindi,Kashmiri,Kannada,Maithili,Malayalam,Marathi,Oriya,Punjabi, Sindhi,Tamil,Urdu and Sanskrit littlebit. These are the voices of Indians Indian writing in English which is greatly influenced by writing in English. Indian English literature has grown a sapling to a strong rooted tree in full bloom. Indians however did not start writing in English in a day it took several historical events and distinguished personalities to bring Indian writing in English to its present eminence .The beginning of Indian writing in English is traced to the end of the 18th centuries and the beginning of the 19th,by which time English education moves more or less firmly established in the three major centers of British power in India - Calcutta,Madras and Bombay.

In the beginning of the Indian writing in English Bharati Sarabhai has been descended as the first modern female play writer and poet during the colonial era. Her two plays*The Well of the People* (1943) and *Two Women* (1952) are inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy. The poems of Toru Dutt (1856-1877) who died at a tender age of 21,has received academic acceptance as the earliest examples of Indian literature in English. Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949) was a great poetess whose romanticism charmed readers in India and Europe. Her *Golden Threshold* (1905) and *The Broken Wing*(1917) are works of great literary merits.

In the galaxy of Indian novelists in English, Indian Women Writers too shine luminously like their male counter parts by their significant contribution to the enrichment of Indian English novels. Identity is the multidimensional world. In psychology and sociology, identity is a person's conception and expression of their individuality or group affiliation (such as national

identity and cultural identity). Identity may be defined as the distinctive characteristic belonging to any given individual or shared by all members of a particular social category or group. The term comes from the French word*identite,* which finds its linguistic roots in the Latin noun *identitas, -talis*, itself a derivation of the Latin adjective *idem* meaning "the same".

The crisis of identity has always enjoyed a defining significance in the thematic frame work of the Indian women novelists. Today the works of KamalaMarkandaya, Kamala Das,NayantaraSahgal,RuthPrawerJhabvala ,Anita Desai,GeetaHariharan,ShashiDeshpande, Kiran Desai,Santha Rama Rau,NergisDalal,AttiaHosain,ShakuntalaShrinagesh,RajiNarasimhan,ManjuKapur, BharatiMukherjee,ShantaRameshwarRao, Rama Meheta,Arundhati Roy, Shobha De and many more have left an indelible imprinton the readers of Indian fiction in English.ShashiDeshpandeis regarded as a famous contemporary Indian women novelist,who has effectively communicated the feminine sensibility. She is also highlighted our cultural heritage in her two novels *RootsandShadows* (1983) and *That Long Silence*(1989). In her novels the protagonist discovers themselves but the quest does not end.KamlaMarkandaya,a post independence writer, draws her canvas on the changing social economic scene. She has to her credit 10 novels.Markandaya's important novels are *Nectar in a Sieve*(1954),*Some Inner Fury*(1957), *A Silence of Desire* (1961), *Possession* **(**1960) and many more.Ruth ParwerJhabvala in her novels she mock at the urban middle class Indian life using gentle irony and satire as weapons. She was a German born British and American Booker prize winning novelist. She wrote a dozen novels, 23 screen plays, 8 collections of short stories. She is the only person to have one both a Booker Prize and an Oscar. Her novels are: *The Nature of Passion*(1956),*Esmond India* (1958),*The House Holder*and many more.NayantaraSahgalis a well known novelist who mostly concerned with the political

affairs of India. Her command over English is rather more impressive than her art as a novelist. She has published*A Time tobeHappy*(1958),*This Time of Morning*(1966), and other non- fiction material.Anita Desaiis more interested in the interior landscape of the mind than in the political and social realities. She made her first debut as novelist in 1963 *Cry the Peacock* which was followedby *Voices in the City (1965),Fire On The Mountain*(1977) won the Winifred Holtby Memorial prize and many more.Arundhati Roy and ManjuKapur have openly discussed free play of sex, homosexuality and lesbianism in their novels. Arundahti Roy took the world with a storm;*The God of Small Things* (1997) won the Booker Prize and became an International best seller.ShobhaDe is also one of the prominent figures in Indian writing in English in modern era. She has seven novels of her own, *In That Socialite Evening*(1989),Starry Nights (1991),*Sisters*(1948)*,Strange Obsession*(1992) and many more. She explored the original nature of human psyche in the modern urban setup which is still fertile area to plough.

Santha Rama Rauand NergisDalal attempt to portray the various aspects of Indian life, along with the east- west encounter and clash of the generations.Santha Rau's *Remembers the House,*NergisDalal's*Minari* and AttiahHosain's*Sunlighton a Broken Column* are outstanding works in Indian writing in English.

BapsiSidhwa is also one of the outstanding figures we find in India in Indian writing in English. Now she is widely recognized as one of the most prominent Pakistani Anglophone novelists. She was raised in the Parsi community a religious and ethnic minority in Pakistan .Critics regardsSidhwa as a feminist postcolonial Asian author. She provides a unique perspective on India and Pakistani history,politics and culture. The cultural multiplicity of her novels makes her novels unique.Sidhwa was born to Parsi Zoroastrian parentsPashotan and TehminaBhandara in Karachi and later moved with her family Lahore. She was two when she

contracted polio which has affected her throughout her life. She received her BA from Kinnaird College for women in Lahore in 1957. She married at the age of 19 and moved to Bombay for 5 year before she divorced and remained in Lahore with her present husband Noshir who is also Zoroastrian. She had 3 children in Pakistan before beginning her carrier as an author.She currently resides in Houstan,Texas, US. She describes herself as a Punjabi –Parsi-Pakistani.Sidhwa worked in the advisory committee of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. She taught women development at Columbia University,University of Houstan and Mount Holyoke college and currently holds the Fanny Hurst position at Brandeis University. She is best known for her collaborative works with Indo-Canadian filmmakerDeepa Mehta. Deepa Mehta made a film Earth based on a novel *Ice Candy Man* and in 2006 Sidhwa write a novel *Water* based on DeepaMehtasFlimWatar.

Among her many honoursSidhwa received ---

1. The Lila Wallace Reader's digest writer's Award in 1994.
2. The US National Endowment for the Arts grant in 1994.
3. The Sitara-I-Imtiaz,Pakistani's National honour in the Arts.
4. Has also held the prestigious Bunting fellowship at Radcliffe /Harvard.
5. PremioMondello for foreign author for Water.

Novels:

- The Crow Eaters (1978)
- The Bride (1982)
- Cracking India (1991)
- An American Brat (1993)
- Water: A Novel (2006)

Other Works:

- Three Language of Love
- Jungle Wala Sahib.
- City of Sin and Splendour : Writings on Lahore
- BapsiSidhwa Omnibus

Aims and Objectives of the Study:

The proposed research will have the following objectives:

- To study the women characters caught in the historical and geographical surroundings and became the victim of social division or partition in 1947.
- To study the Parsi community a religious and ethnic minority in Pakistan and India.
- To study the unique combination of Indian,Pakistani and American culture.
- To study the cultural multiplicity of Sidhwa's novel which makes her novels unique.
- To study the expose of the parochialattitude and narrow mindedness of American society.
- To study the fundamentalism presented by the author which is notonly restricted to the Muslim community but also to other communities.
- To study the theme of the feminist concern as reflected in the novels.
- To study the theme of the struggle between tradition and modernity, the conflicts and their over comings in the novels under study.
- To study the portrayal of female protagonist in India,Pakistan and America.
- To study the cultural clashespresented inSidhwa's Novels.

Hypothesis:

In the present research work, the hypothesis will be substantiated on the basis of the values and human relations handed by the writer in her novels. The focus of the research will be on the themes and the effort of the writer in presenting the life's journey of her characters which preoccupied with the quest for identity.

Scope of the Study:

This research will offer an in-depth analysis and evaluation of BapsiSidhwa's contribution to the English literature. The Summing up of all the arguments of the various aspects of her novels so far is highlighted. The forgoing study has hopefully revealed that women novelists have displayed their artistic skill in transmitting their vibrant thoughts and raising them to the stated of literature.

Limitations of the Study:

The present research intends to explain life sketch of BapsiSidhwa and her literary career. The novelist understudy has produced a large number of works. Hence, the research work covers only her novels. It also aims at the thematic study of her novels and the problems described in the novels whatever it is a political, religious, democracy and human relation.

Research Methodology:

This research has used the qualitative approach which follows inductive method. It isfrom specific to general. It is of descriptive and analytical in nature. The author may be interviewed online and collected her interview so far given. The primary material also should be collected soon. There are no tables or sort of graphic work. The research material in the internet issued also used in present study**.**

Chapter Scheme:

The proposed research work will constitute the following chapter scheme:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: The Crow Eaters

Chapter 3: The Pakistani Bride.

Chapter 4: Cracking India / Ice candy man.

Chapter 5: An American Brat

Chapter 6: Water

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Introductory chapter focuses on the history of Indian women fiction.This also deals with the quintessence of the Indian experience that is truly Indian in its nature and sprit.In this chapter we witness an independent thought and literary carrier among the women which was not hindered by any culture and tradition.This chapter also particularly focuses on BapsiSidhwa and her works, criticism and statement of the problem. Through her novels she presented sufferings

of women in the male dominated society that how the rules change for men and women.Sidhwa presents the paradoxical situation of social life. Through her writing ironically she presented human foibles and follies.

Chapter 2: The Crow Eaters

The crow eater's novel tells the achievements of a tiny community which has survived cultural invasions. The community succeeds in retaining its cultural invasions and cultural identity.It is about Faredoon, nicknamedFreddy. He is ambitious and achieves name and fame have dubious roots. Freddy is a great advocate of the feminist causes probably in spite of his encouragement, his wife Putli prefers to walk three steps behind her husband.Whereas Yazid the second son of Freddy is very sensitive.A human dimension to his revolt is introduced as his father refuses him permission to marry his childhood sweet-heart, the Anglo-Indian Rosy Watson. The picture of a Parsi girl is presented in this novel that how a Parsi girl often faces a dilemma.That her life style and value system are more Western than traditional but even though she is pressurized to fit into the rigid moral code of the Parsi community. So Sidhwa here presented that how men wanted a women in their life but that should be on their own conditions, they wanted to treat them as the puppets in their hands.

Chapter 3: The Pakistani Bride.

BapsiSidhwa is a Pakistani novelist who writes in English and is resident in America. Through this novel she presents the combination of Pakistani American culture. This chapter provides an incisive look into the treatment of women Zaitoon, a young girl, is victimized by the deliberating patriacrchal prescriptions of an insular tribal society. At the age of sixteen Zaitoon's marriage is fixed with Sakhi, a tribal man. The marriage and the interlude of joy that follows are

both short-lived. Zaitoon's torture begins on the very next day after marriage. Here Zaitoon's struggle is for autonomy and an identity of her own. Here she fights with a hostile environment and with her strong will power the girl is able to overcome the obstacles strewn in her path, At the end she ultimately protected and saved.

The second character in this novel is Carol, an Americangirl, married to a Pakistani army officer is equally oppressed in her relationship. Carol belongs to Western upper-class community; she more easily breaks the relations. So here Sidhwa very beautifully presented the fight of two women who belong to different community and culture and their quest for identity.

Chapter 4: Cracking India / Ice candy man.

In this novel the protagonist Ayah who becomes a victim to the lust of men during the partition riots in Ice-Candy Man. Ayah is the highly victimized woman who suffers excruciating pain and agony at the hands of the mob that tears her apart. As if this physical abuse by the mob were no enough, The Ice Candy man clinches her lot by condemning her to prostitution. In certain circumstances we find the women's fight for survival , the quest for identity. Here the use of narrator is also unique as it is the only novel in which BapsiSidhwa uses a Parsi-girl-child narrator Lenny. It is the first novel written on Partition from a Parsi perspective and is, therefore, considered more objective than other books. Ice-Candy Man gives us a glimpse into events of turmoil in the Indian subcontinent during Partition. Here the 8 years old protagonist Lenny presents the love-hate relationship of the Hindu and Muslim.

Chapter 5: An American Brat

Here Bapsi takes the issue of globalization. Here she handles the change in theme and lot of humor from a contemporary perspective. Here the author marks her entry in to the orbit of diasporicfiction. In this novel we find a genius writer and a keen observer. Here we find the story of a young woman and her journey through three-cultures, her own community's Parsi culture, her country Pakistani's Islamic culture and the Western culture of the United States of America. Here we find the victim of cultural differences FerozaGinwalla, a sixteen-year old young Pakistani-Parsi girl, in America. Here Lahore based family sends her to the United States of America for a three-month vacation to broaden her outlook on life. But they had not imagined in their wildest imagination that she would challenge traditional views, static orthodoxy and grow beyond the confines of communality and the norms of a patriarchal society. Here the protagonist become too modern for her patriarchal family. So here we find the quest that how the protagonist slightly shift from one culture to another. So here the self-realization and self-awareness that FerozaGinwalla acquires ironically isolates her from her Parsi heritage. The Zoroastrian mode of life of Feroza clashes with the modern American way of thinking and life style. Here the author presents the modern multicultural society.

Chapter 6: Water

Water is all about the Indian widows in 1930s and how they were made to live in the widow houses. Here the culture not only exploits the widows but also the women are dragged into prostitution. Sidhwa realistically illustrated women's plight and exploitation in the patriarchal society. Men establish their masculine powers and hence fulfill their desires by brutally assaulting women. Men are aggressors feel elated and victorious whereas women endure the pain and humiliation of the barbarity enacted upon them. Sidhwa's women character are

fairly beautiful intelligent, modest but strong-willed and courageous. They try to cope with the parental society and cultural pressures in their life as much as they can but when they find their very life or identity in danger, they throw off all shackles and fight with full force to foil the foul attempts of their adversary. Sidhwa is very optimistic writer. She seems to give a positive message to woman that life must be presented under any circumstance since one can fight oppression only when one is alive.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The last chapter is the conclusion in which all previous conclusion of the chapter are brought together, leading to a total reassessment of the author with the placement among the writers. It is the final chapter which sums up the findings of the study. The chapter takes a bird's eye view of BapsiSidhwa's all fictional works revealing there in the thematic patterns Sidhwa diligently researches every aspect and situation in her works. We find reality more in her novels, and she avoids unnecessary details and passing judgment on her characters. He always have sympathetic attitude towards her characters, she is a good moralist. The individualism and some of humor makes her one of the finest writers of sub-continental English Fiction.

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